

State Route 32 at Kennedy Avenue



Final Initial Study

03-BUT-32 KP 9.11/10.03

(PM 5.66/6.23)

EA 4A4400

SEPTEMBER 2003



General Information About This Document

What's in this document?

This document is an Initial Study (IS), which examined the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for the proposed project located in Butte County, California. The document describes why the project was proposed, alternative methods for constructing the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, and potential impacts from each of the alternatives.

On July 31, 2003, Caltrans distributed the draft IS to the public for a 30-day review period. All comments on the draft IS are presented in this final IS. Revisions are indicated with a line in the outside margin of the page, new text is underlined, and deleted text is shown with a strikethrough.

On September 30, 2003, Caltrans adopted a Negative Declaration, determining through this study that the proposed project would not have a significant affect on the environment. On October 1, 2003, this document was filed with the State Clearinghouse, making it available for public inspection for a period of 30 days.

03-BUT-32-KP 9.11/10.03
(PM 5.66/6.23)
EA 03-4A4400

State Route 32 at Kennedy Avenue

INITIAL STUDY

Submitted Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

7-28-03
Date of Approval

for Jonathan Oldham, Acting Chief
North Region Environmental Services
California Department of Transportation

Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

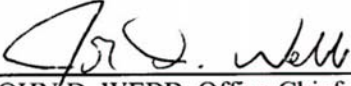
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct a 3.6-meter (m) (12 ft) two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) and 2.4-m (8 ft) shoulders on State Route (SR) 32 in Butte County from just west of East Avenue through Kennedy Avenue to match an existing TWLTL west of Kennedy Avenue.

Determination

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study, and determines from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant affect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project will not impact Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodplains, recreational areas, sensitive plant/animal species, wildlife or mineral resources. No change will occur in local and regional air quality, traffic, population, or planned use. Seismic and soil related hazards will not increase. There are no designated historic properties or other cultural resources within the project limits.

Potential impacts to hazardous material and water quality will be less than significant. Impacts to visual resources, noise and community resources will be less than significant. Avoidance and Minimization Measures, Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Special Provisions will be implemented to avoid and reduce impacts.



JOHN D. WEBB, Office Chief
North Region Environs
California Department of Transportation

9-30-03
Date

Summary

On July 30, 2003, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) distributed the draft Initial Study (IS) for the State Route (SR) 32 at Kennedy Avenue project. The draft IS was available for review from July 31, 2003 until August 29, 2003. All comments and responses to comments to the draft IS are presented in Chapter 3 of this final IS.

Final selection of a preferred alternative was not made until after the full evaluation of environmental impacts, full consideration of public comments, and at the time of approval of the final environmental document. Caltrans reviewed and considered individual comments regarding the relocation of one residence within the project area. As a result, the Project Development Team made revisions to the project design to avoid relocation of the property at 2260 Kennedy Avenue. A down-scoped version of Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative. The alternative is described in the next paragraph below. The alternative is down-scoped in that it will no longer include realignment of Kennedy Avenue and relocation of one property owner. Alternative 4, no-build alternative, did not accomplish the purpose and need of the project and was not selected as the preferred alternative.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct a 3.6-meter (m) (12 ft) two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) and 2.4-m (8 ft) shoulders on State Route (SR) 32 in Butte County from just west of East Avenue through Kennedy Avenue to match an existing TWLTL west of Kennedy Avenue. The purpose of this project is to improve traffic safety.

This project has five alternatives. Alternative 1, as described above, is the preferred alternative. Alternative 1a proposes to realign Kennedy Avenue just west of the Alternative 1 alignment. This alternative would require additional construction and right of way costs and was therefore rejected. Alternative 2 proposes to widen SR 32 to the north of SR 32 and to leave Kennedy Avenue in its current skewed configuration. This alternative would impact a number of businesses along westbound SR 32 and the potential right-of-way costs would be significantly higher. This alternative was rejected, because of the additional right-of-way costs. Alternative 3 includes construction of curb, gutter, and sidewalk on both sides of SR 32 which would increase project costs and disqualify the project as a safety project. For this reason, Alternative 3 was rejected. Alternative 4 is the “No-Build”

alternative and does not meet the purpose and need of the project and was therefore also rejected. The project development team determined that Alternative 1 provided the greatest benefit for improving the safety of the area with the least amount of impacts to businesses and residences.

This project has the potential to impact hazardous material and water quality. The project will also impact visual resources, noise and community resources. The impacts to these resources are less than significant. Caltrans Best Management Practices and Standard Provisions will be implemented to avoid and reduce any possible impacts.

This project will require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit. Temporary Construction Easements may be needed for utility relocation. This project is State and federally funded.

The draft Initial Study was made available to the public and state agencies for review and comments for 30 days. At the completion of the circulation period, comments are responded to in Chapter 3, "Public Review and Comments." Revisions made to the draft Initial Study are indicated with a line in the right margin of the page. New text is underlined and deleted text is shown with a strikethrough.

On the basis of this Initial Study, the appropriate environmental document for this project is a *Negative Declaration* pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A *Categorical Exclusion* was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The project will not have a significant affect on the environment.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Proposed Project	1
1.1 Project Description	1
1.2 Purpose and Need	1
1.3 Project Alternatives	2
1.3.1 Alternatives Considered But Withdrawn	3
1.4 Permits and Approvals Needed	4
Chapter 2 Environmental Impacts	7
2.1 Human Environment	7
2.1.1 Land Use and Growth	7
2.1.2 Farmlands/Agricultural Lands	7
2.1.3 Community Impacts	7
2.1.4 Utilities/Emergency Services	8
2.1.5 Visual/Aesthetics	8
2.1.6 Cultural Resources	8
2.2 Physical Environment	9
2.2.1 Hydrology and Floodplain	9
2.2.2 Water Quality and Storm Water Run-off	9
2.2.3 Hazardous Waste/Materials	10
2.2.4 Air Quality	11
2.2.5 Noise	11
2.3 Biological Environment	12
2.3.1 Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States	12
2.3.2 Vegetation	12
2.3.3 Wildlife	12
2.3.4 Threatened and Endangered Species	13
2.4 Cumulative Impacts	13
Chapter 3 Public Review and Comments	15
3.1 Public Notice	16
3.2 Comments / Responses to Comments	17
Appendix A CEQA Environmental Checklist	37
Appendix B List of Preparers and Technical Studies	47
Appendix C Project Design (DRAFT)	49

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct a 3.6-meter (m) (12 ft) two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) and 2.4-m (8 ft) shoulders on State Route (SR) 32 in Butte County from just west of East Avenue through Kennedy Avenue to match an existing TWLTL west of Kennedy Avenue (See figures 1 & 2 and Appendix C for project mapping). It is planned for the northern leg of Kennedy Avenue to be closed off with a cul-de-sac by Butte County prior to construction of this project. This project will be funded from the Minor SHOPP (State Highway Operation and Protection Program) under the Safety Improvements (010) program. Construction is currently planned for 2005 and will take approximately 3 months.

SR 32 through the project area is a two-lane conventional highway with shoulders of varying width. The posted speed limit is approximately 72 kilometers per hour (45 miles per hour). The terrain through the project area is flat and the roadway is tangent through the project area. Businesses and residences are adjacent to SR 32.

Driveways along Kennedy Avenue will be reconstructed to connect to the new highway section. Various utility owners potentially could be required to relocate a number of their facilities. Right-of-way easements may be necessary for utility relocation.

1.2 Purpose and Need

This project was identified through a Traffic Safety Investigation and programmed as a 010 project through Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) guidelines. A minimum Traffic Safety Index (TSI) of 200 is required to fund a project through the HSIP. The ultimate goal of the HSIP is to reduce the number and severity of accidents on State highways by implementing safety improvements to existing roadways. This project has a calculated safety index of over 200, which qualifies it as a safety project under the HSIP Guidelines.

There have been a number of collisions throughout the project area, which are susceptible to correction by the addition of a two-way left two lane (TWLTL) and

2.4-m (8 ft) shoulders. The majority of these collisions have involved drivers attempting to either turn into or turn out of Kennedy Avenue and the private and/or commercial driveways along SR 32. Two types of collision patterns have been observed. The first are rear-end collisions along SR 32 and the second are broadside collisions where drivers are attempting to turn onto SR 32 from driveways and side streets.

Providing a TWLTL should reduce the number of collisions, as drivers will have a dedicated lane to make their turning movements from SR 32 while the remainder of the SR 32 through traffic continues unimpeded. Widening the shoulders to 2.4-m (8 ft) will provide drivers with additional paved roadway surface to conduct avoidance maneuvers and will also provide sufficient width for most drivers to pull completely off the traveled way.

1.3 Project Alternatives

Final selection of a preferred alternative was not made until after the full evaluation of environmental impacts, full consideration of public comments, and at the time of approval of the final environmental document. A down-scoped version of Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative. The alternative is as described in the next paragraph below. The alternative is down-scoped in that it will no longer include realignment of Kennedy Avenue. Alternative 4, no-build alternative, did not accomplish the purpose and need of the project and was not selected as the preferred alternative.

Proposed Project-Alternative 1

The proposed project will construct a 3.6-m (12 ft) TWLTL and widen the shoulders to 2.4-m (8 ft). Widening will be done about the existing centerline. Utilities may need to be relocated and easements may be required for the utility relocations and to reconfigure driveways. This is the preferred alternative.

There is the possibility that Butte County will underground all utilities between East Avenue and Kennedy Avenue, as part of a local Underground District. The Butte County project is a separate project and will require environmental clearance by the County.

1.3.1 Alternatives Considered But Withdrawn

Alternative 1a

This alternative proposed realigning Kennedy Avenue just west of the Alternative 1 alignment which would require the acquisition of part of a business property. This alternative would entail additional construction to potentially realign the southwest bound Kennedy Avenue traffic, which would be cut off from more direct access to SR 32. This coupled with additional right-of-way costs led to rejection of this alternative.

Alternative 2

Widening will be done about the centerline, except through the Kennedy intersection, where all widening will be shifted to the north of SR 32. Kennedy Avenue would be left in its current skewed configuration. This alternative would impact a number of businesses along westbound SR 32 and the potential right-of-way costs would be significantly higher. This alternative was rejected because of the additional right-of-way costs.

Alternative 3

This alternative included construction of curb, gutter, and sidewalk on both sides of SR 32. The installation of curb, gutter and sidewalk would require either the construction of a storm drain system or the installation of individual leach trench systems.

Both the storm drain system and installation of individual leach trench systems would have involved considerable easement, long-term maintenance, and construction costs. The scope of this project is limited to addressing safety concerns. Both of these options would increase project cost and therefore not meet the required safety index, and consequently disqualify the project as a safety project. The project would then have to go into competition for funds as an operational project and at the minimum, this would delay project delivery. For this reason, this alternative was rejected.

Alternative 4 - "No-Build"

Under CEQA, environmental review must consider the effects of not implementing the proposed project. Under the no-build alternative the existing roadway configuration would remain in place. Although this alternative would not result in any environmental impacts, it would not achieve the basic purpose and need of the proposed project, which is to improve safety.

1.4 Permits and Approvals Needed

This project will require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit. No other permits are needed. Concurrence that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project has been obtained from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). A *Categorical Exclusion* has been prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Figure 1 Project Vicinity Map

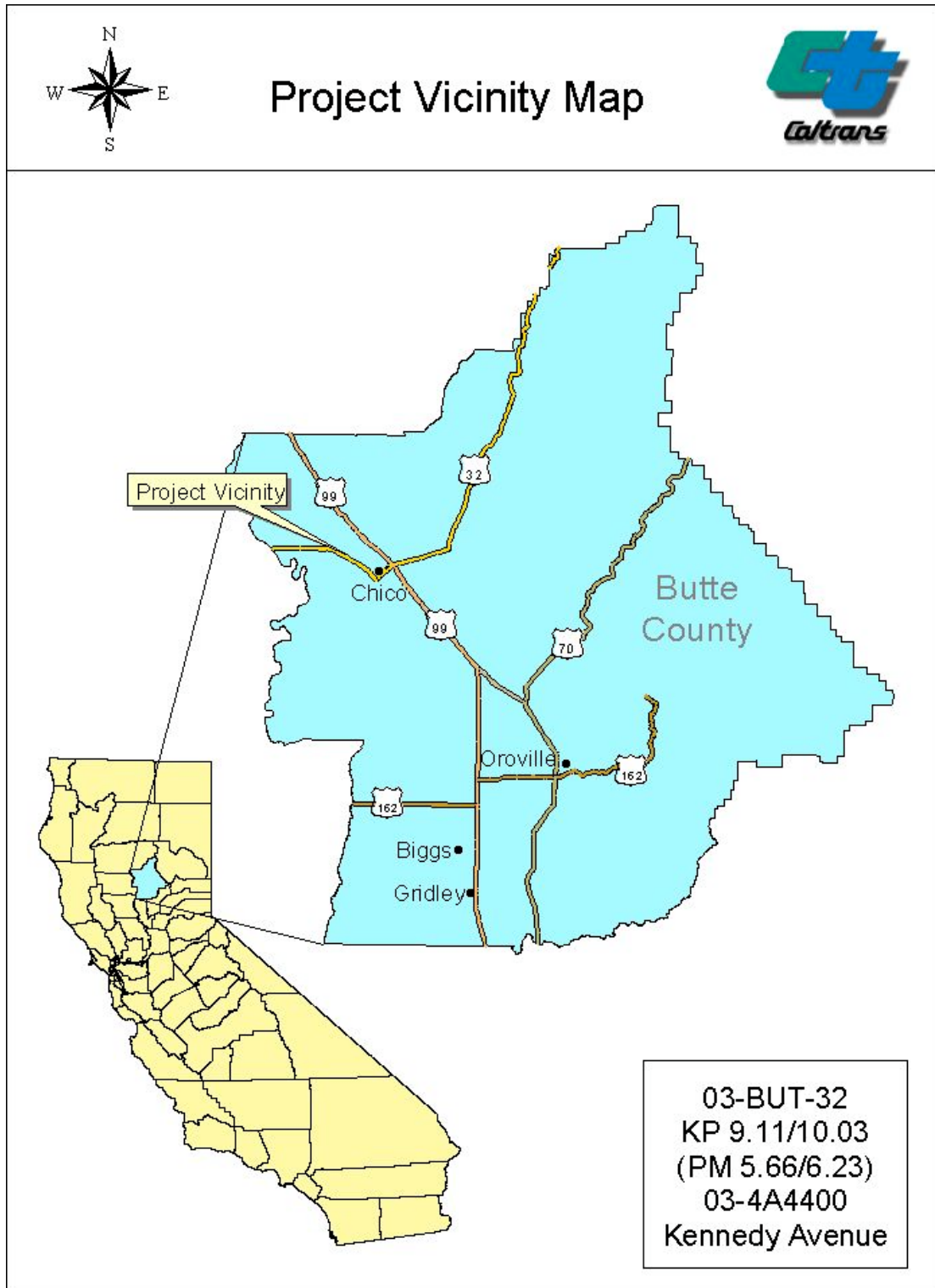


Figure 2 Project Location Map

